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WOMAN'S UNION.

Japan
(Feast)



DAUGHTERS OF JAPAN.



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The Feast of Dolls.



HERE are two little Japanese girls who, every year, enjoy the Feast of Dolls. Do you know them? No?

Well, then, I'll tell you about Komme and Lugi, for these are their names. If they lived in America, they would be called Little Plum and Cedar, for these are what the words Komme and Lugi mean.

The Feast of Dolls comes once a year,—on the third day of March. It is the greatest day of the year for girls. The boys do not care much about it, because their great day, called the Feast of Flags, comes on the day of May.

Lugi and Komme are both of them school-children and study very hard. When a holiday comes, they enjoy it very much, for they are glad to lay down their books, which are full of curious Japanese and Chinese letters. So, last March, on the day before the Feast of Dolls,

they washed the ink off their hands, hung up their copy-books, and laid aside their cakes of ink and ink-stones with more than usual care. Japanese children rub what we call "India" ink on a stone, and write with this altogether.

After coming home from school, they had an early supper; for their mothers wanted plenty of time to arrange the dolls and toys on tables, and to do this requires as much time as Santa Claus requires to fill stockings or to trim Christmas trees.

So the two sisters were soon in bed, with their heads on their curious little pillows, made of a piece of wood with a cushion on top of it. Their mother saw that they were safe under the covers, and then said: "*o yasumi nasare*," which means "rest well," and which people in Japan say instead of "good-night," as a bed-time kiss.

Finally they fell asleep, and then their mother began to prepare the toys and the dolls, and the dolls' dinner and tea-service, and sweetmeats and dainty food for her darlings and their doll-friends.

Nearly every large house in Japan has a

smaller house beside or near it, which is fire-proof. In this storehouse the valuable things are kept. The servants went to this house and brought a great many boxes into the largest room of the dwelling. Then Komme and Lugi's mamma and papa opened the boxes and arranged the tables. Everything in the boxes were wrapped up in silk. They were kept quite busy for three hours. Then the Japanese mamma and papa went to bed.

The little girls rose earlier than usual the next morning. They quickly dressed, putting on their best robes of red crape and curiously-figured silk, and went first to their parents, as Japanese children always do, and wished them "good-morning." They did not eat much breakfast, as they were too eager to see their dolls.

Now, how many dolls did these little girls have, do you suppose? It was a Feast of Dolls, you must remember! One? Two? Four? Five?

Guess again. Ten? More than ten; you would hardly believe it, but they had over a hundred dolls. Japan is, above all others, the land for dolls.

Some of them were two hundred years old. Think of that ! They had belonged to Komme's great-grandmother's great-grandmother. I suppose you would have called them Methusaleh's daughters. Their faces were very dark with age ; their gilt ornaments were all tarnished ; but, strange to say, their dress was still fashionable in Japan. Fashions do not change there, every few months, but remain just the same for centuries. Then there were dolls which had belonged to Komme's grandmother and to her mother, and it was like a great Thanksgiving party at home, when grandpa and papa and mamma and all the children meet together.

There were Mikados and Mikados' wives, and Tycoons and Tycoonesses, and ladies and gentlemen of the Court, boy-babies and girl-babies, and young Japanese ladies and young Japanese gentlemen. All were dressed in a manner entirely different from any American dolls. The Mikado's wife and ladies of the Court wear their hair far down their backs, and have on a kind of loose pantaloons of cherry red silk. The Tycoon had on a very high black cap perched

on the front part of his head, and he and his officers and men always wore swords in their silk girdles. Indeed it looked to me, when I went into Komme's house, as if all the different kind of Japanese I had ever seen, either in the palace or on the street, had suddenly become small, and were sitting on Komme's table.

But the dolls were only part of the show. There were tables to eat from, and to play games on. Some were for checkers ; some for "proverb" cards. As for the dishes and cups and bottles, and things to eat out of and with, they were too many to count, and yet they were nearly all different from our table-service. Then there were dogs and cats and deer and wild boars, fishes and lobsters, all made to play with, and very pretty. Then there were tiny racks and "horses" to hang clothes upon, and on these everything belonging to a girl's or a lady's dress was hung. Do you think it strange that among them all was not one hat or bonnet, one pair of boots, or one frock ? Japanese ladies never wear any of these, and yet they have very pretty dresses, and look very neat, and dress very becomingly.

All children's playthings are only tiny copies of what their parents and grown folks play with—I mean what they use. So I found when I went to see Komme's father, and looked in upon their fun, that everything they were playing with was just like what I saw the Japanese fathers and mothers use. They did not have any railroads in Japan then ; so everybody had to travel in a *kago*, which is a kind of basket, or box, carried by men.

Komme and Lugi had plenty of traveling-boxes and trunks, made of sandal-wood and camphor-wood, and several handsome *kagos*. They played taking the Mikado to Kioto, and all the make-believe lords and ladies followed them. When they arrived in Kioto, they were very hungry, and all sat down to dinner.

How I wish you could have seen that dinner,—that real Feast of Dolls. Each table was only about four inches square, but on it were rice and fish and ginger and radishes and beans and tea and buckwheat cakes. I suppose the dolls all enjoyed it; but they left the feast uneaten. Still, it was good Japanese food. There was no bread,

no beef, no cheese, no pies, no milk, no coffee, for the Japanese people very seldom eat or drink these things, and Japanese dolls, never.

After the feast they made some of the dolls dance. They put the Mikado on his throne, and brought up the Tycoon and all the lords and gentlemen to bow to him. They made each doll bow its head and touch the floor with its forehead. Then they made the ladies play on the *koto*, a kind of Japanese harp. Komme made the dolls go through the motions, while Lugi made the music.

By and by it was time for the dolls to be put to bed, and then their curious sleeping-coats were put on, and each head was laid on its pillow. By this time mamma found that it was nearly time for her darlings to go to sleep also.

The Feast of Dolls in Japan lasts only one day, but the display of toys is kept up for several days.

But now I must say what all Japanese boys and girls and everybody else in Japan say when they part—"sayonara."—WILLIAM E. GRIFFIS.

—From *St. Nicholas*, by permission of Messrs. Scribner & Co.

Our young friends will enjoy this charming sketch the more, for the special interest they have in the "little daughters of Japan." The Woman's Union Missionary Society have had for many years an AMERICAN MISSION HOME in Yokohama, Japan, sustained entirely by the mothers and daughters of America, where many young Japanese girls have heard for the first time of Jesus the Children's Friend, and been trained for useful Christian lives. This Home is now as full as it can conveniently be, and twenty-five of the younger children have a smaller house within the grounds all to themselves. A merry family with their work and play! Every day brings happiness, but there is one specially happy day throughout the Home, and that is CHRISTMAS, when the tall and shapely "Christmas Tree" which the kind teachers always prepare, is hung with dolls from America, dolls dressed and sent out by members of our Mission-Bands, months in advance, to be thus used as Christmas gifts to little friends in Japan whose faces they have never seen! Beside the dolls we may be sure there is upon the "Tree" something sweet to eat! and so here in Japan comes a new festival day, another "feast of dolls," but not now a heathen festival in memory of the spirits of men and women, but a Christian holiday, in memory of Jesus, the little babe of Bethlehem, over whose cradle angels sang "ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TO MAN,"

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LAND OF THE SUN-SOURCE.

